

STATUS OF CLAIMS:

Claims 2-30 are pending herein, claim 1 having been cancelled above without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 10 is amended to address the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to incorporate limitations from claim 1, thereby placing it in a condition for allowance. Claims 2, 8, 19, 21 and 25-27 have been amended to remove their dependency upon a cancelled claim and/or to provide them with proper antecedent basis.

REMARKS

Rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. This rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendment to claim 10. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 1-9 and 19-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-9 and 21-27 are presently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0033135 A1 ("Duggal") in view of applicant's alleged "admission of prior art." Claims 19 and 20 are presently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Duggal in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,339,289 ("Fork").

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and their supporting remarks.

Moreover, claim 10 is indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and to include limitations of the base claim. This course of action has been implemented by the above claim amendments. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is in a condition for allowance.

Claims 2-9 and 19-27 depend, either directly or indirectly from claim 10, and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons as is claim 10. Claim 1 is cancelled.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-9, 19, 20 and 21-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action of June 20, 2003, claim 10, as well as claims 11-18 and 28-30 dependent upon claim 10 at that time, were objected to, but were indicated to be allowable if

rewritten to overcome the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include the limitations of the base claim.

As noted in the prior section, this has been carried out. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10, and claims 2-9 and 11-30 which presently depend from claim 10, are in condition for allowance.

Per the Examiner's request in Paragraph no. 1 of the Office Action dated June 20, 2003, applicant re-submits herewith copies of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on May 9, 2002 and February 13, 2002, including copies of all references previously submitted, and copies of the respective date-stamped confirmation postcard.

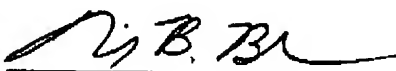
CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that claims 2-30 are in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner be of the view that an interview would expedite the application at large, request is made that the Examiner telephone the Applicant's attorney at (703) 433-0510 in order to resolve any outstanding issues.

FEES

The Office is authorized to charge any fees required to deposit account number 50-1047.

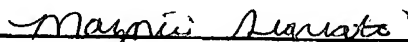
Respectfully submitted,



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